

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~1~~5, wherein the ~~securing~~steering mechanism is affixed to an outlet nozzle of the watercraft.

3. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~1~~5, wherein the securing means incorporates nut-and-bolt fixtures for affixing the steering mechanism to the body of the watercraft.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism ~~as claimed in claim 1, for jet-~~
propelled watercraft comprising:

a rudder, the rudder being movable between a steering and a non-steering position and configured to couple with a steering column of the watercraft when in a steering position, and incorporating a plate member located in a substantially ventral position;

securing means for securing the steering mechanism to the watercraft;

biasing means for biasing the rudder towards a non-steering position; and

actuating means for actuating the movement of the rudder towards the steering position automatically, upon the speed of the watercraft dropping below a predetermined level, and

wherein the biasing means incorporates a spring-loaded engaging member that is configured to engage the plate member of the rudder at high speeds or high nozzle velocities, and to disengage from the plate member at low speeds or low nozzle velocities.

6. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~4~~5, wherein the biasing means incorporates a piston-and-lug arrangement that biases the rudder towards the non-steering position.

7. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 6, wherein the lug is coupled to the actuating means.

8. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~4~~5, wherein the actuating means is adapted to detect the speed of the watercraft , and, on detecting that the speed of the watercraft has dropped below a predetermined level, overcomes the biasing means to reverse the direction of its bias, allowing the rudder to move towards the steering position.

9. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~4~~5, wherein the actuating means is adapted to detect the rate of revolutions of the watercraft engine and may incorporate speed-sensitive apparatus which, on the engine-revolutions of the

watercraft dropping below a predetermined level, overcomes the biasing means to reverse the direction of its bias, allowing the rudder to move towards the steering position.

10. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~4~~5, wherein the actuating means is adapted to detect water pressure by a water pressure detection means, and to actuate movement of the rudder in response to the detected water pressure.

11. (Original) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 10, wherein the water pressure detection means detects water pressure within the outlet nozzle of the watercraft.

12. (Original) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 10, wherein the water pressure detection means detects water pressure in the surrounding water.

13. (Original) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 10, wherein the water pressure detection means detects water pressure difference between the outlet nozzle and the surrounding water.

14. (Original) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 10, wherein the water pressure detection means is a venturi.

15. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim ~~4~~5, wherein the actuating means operates by means of a feedback control device.

16. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 15, wherein the ~~actuation~~ actuating means operates by means of pressurised fluid.

17. (Original) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 16, wherein the source of pressurized fluid is a pressurized cylinder.

18. (Original) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 17, wherein the pressurized fluid is released from the pressurized cylinder for use in the actuation means by a solenoid.

19. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 15, wherein the actuation means is a pneumatic piston and cylinder arrangement.

20. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism as claimed in claim 15, wherein the actuation means is a hydraulic piston and cylinder arrangement.

21. (Currently Amended) A steering mechanism ~~as claimed in claim 1, for jet-propelled watercraft comprising:~~

a rudder, the rudder being movable between a steering and a non-steering position and configured to couple with a steering column of the watercraft when in a steering position, and incorporating a plate member located in a substantially ventral position;

securing means for securing the steering mechanism to the watercraft;

~~wherein the biasing means biases~~ for biasing the rudder towards the steering position, and

~~the actuating means~~ for automatically actuates ~~actuating~~ the movement of the rudder towards the non-steering position, upon the speed of the watercraft dropping below a predetermined level, and

wherein the biasing means incorporates a spring-loaded engaging member that is configured to engage the plate member of the rudder at high speeds or high nozzle velocities, and to disengage from the plate member at low speeds or low nozzle velocities.

22. (Withdrawn) A method for the automatic deployment of a steering mechanism in a watercraft, comprising the steps of automatically controlling the actuation of a rudder between a steering and non-steering position in response to the speed of the watercraft.